**In the Claims**

1. (canceled)

2. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein the chemical composition of the polyhydroxyalkanoate is altered through selection of monomers which are incorporated into the polymer, by alteration of the linkages, chemical backbone or pendant groups.

3. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate composition comprises additives altering the degradation rate of the composition, wherein the additives are selected from the group consisting of hydrophilic substances, hydrophobic substances, and coating which alter water uptake by the composition.

4. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate comprises a polymer selected from the group of consisting of poly-4-hydroxybutyrate, poly-4-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxybutyrate, poly-4-hydroxybutyrate-co-2-hydroxybutyrate, and copolymers and blends thereof.

5. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly-3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyhexanoate, poly-3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyoctanoate, poly-3-hydroxybutryrate-co-3-hydroxydecanoate, and copolymers and blends thereof.

6. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate comprises one or more units which alter the chemical stability of the polymer backbone.

7. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 comprising unit(s) promoting chain scission.

8. (original) The device of claim 7 wherein the units contain more than two functional groups.

9. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein a heteroatom is incorporated into the polymer backbone chain.

10. (original) The device of claim 9 wherein the heteroatom is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen.

11. (original) The device of claim 7 wherein the units are incorporated into the polymer backbone with chemical linkages selected from the group consisting of ester, amide, ether, carbamate, anhydride, and carbonate.

12. (previously presented) The device of claim 7 wherein the units are selected from the group consisting of 2-hydroxyacids, 2-hydroxyalkaoxyacetic acids, amino acids, amino alcohols, diacids, triols, and tetraols.

13. (previously presented) The device of claim 12 wherein the 2-hydroxyacids are 2-hydroxyalkanoic acids.

14. (original) The device of claim 13 wherein the 2-hydroxyalkanoic acid is lactic acid or glycolic acid.

15. (canceled)

16. (original) The device of claim 12 wherein the 2-hydroxyalkoxyacetic acids are selected from the group consisting of 2-hydroxyethoxy acetic acid and 3-hydroxypropoxy acetic acid.

17. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 wherein the polymer comprises pendant groups that catalyze the degradation of the polymer backbone.

18. (original) The device of claim 17 wherein the pendant groups are selected from acidic and basic groups.

19. (original) The device of claim 17 comprising reactant pendant groups that cause polymer chain scission.

20. (original) The device of claim 19 wherein the reactant pendant groups are selected from nucleophiles and electrophiles.

21. (original) The device of claim 17 wherein the pendant groups are selected from the group consisting of alcohols, acids, and amine groups.

22. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 comprising additives altering the chemical stability of the polyhydroxyalkanoate.

23. (original) The device of claim 22 wherein the additives promote chain scission.

24. (original) The device of claim 22 wherein the additives are selected from the group consisting of acids, bases, electrophiles, nucleophiles, plasticizers, polymers, pore forming agents, and agents designed to reduce the polymer crystallinity.

25. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 comprising pore forming agents.

26. (original) The device of claim 25 wherein the pore forming agents are lyophilizable particles.

27. (original) The device of claim 25 wherein the pore forming agents absorb water.

28. (previously presented) The device of claim 30 further comprising one or more active agents.

29. (original) The device of claim 28 wherein the active agent is selected from the group consisting of growth factors, alginates, silver salts, antiseptics, analgesics, and preservatives.

30. (currently amended) A device comprising a biodegradable polyhydroxyalkanoate polymer composition that has a controlled degradation rate ~~of less than one year~~, under physiological conditions,

wherein the average molecular mass loss of the polymer decreases 20% to 50% over a ten week time period *in vivo* or wherein the percent mass loss is greater than 5% over a six week period in vivo,

wherein the degradation rate of the polyhydroxyalkanoate polymer is manipulated through addition of components to the polymeric composition, selection of the chemical composition, molecular weight, processing conditions, or form of the composition,

wherein the polyhydroxyalkanoate polymer has a weight average molecular weight of between 10,000 and 10,000,000 Daltons, and

wherein the device is selected from the group consisting of sutures, suture fasteners, meniscus repair devices, rivets, tacks, staples, screws, bone plates and bone plating systems, surgical mesh, repair patches, slings, cardiovascular patches, orthopedic pins, adhesion barriers, stents, guided tissue repair/regeneration devices, articular cartilage repair devices, nerve guides, tendon repair devices, atrial septal defect repair devices, pericardial patches, bulking and filling agents, vein valves, bone marrow scaffolds, meniscus regeneration devices, ligament and tendon grafts, ocular cell implants, spinal fusion cages, skin substitutes, dural substitutes, bone graft substitutes, bone dowels, wound dressings, and hemostats.

31. (currently amended) A method for making a device that has a controlled degradation rate ~~less than two years, more preferably less than one year~~ under physiological conditions, wherein the average molecular mass of the polymer decreases 20% to 50% over a ten week period *in* vivo or wherein the percent mass loss is greater than 5% over a six week period in vivo, comprising

providing a biocompatible polyhydroxyalkanoate composition, as defined by claim 30; and

forming or incorporating the polyhydroxyalkanoate composition into a device selected from the group consisting of sutures, suture fasteners, meniscus repair devices, rivets, tacks, staples, screws, bone plates and bone plating systems, surgical mesh, repair patches, slings, cardiovascular patches, orthopedic pins, adhesion barriers, stents, guided tissue repair/regeneration devices, articular cartilage repair devices, nerve guides, tendon repair

devices, atrial septal defect repair devices, pericardial patches, bulking and filling agents, ligament and tendon grafts, ocular cell implants, spinal fusion cages, skin substitutes, dural substitutes, bone graft substitutes, bone dowels, heart valves and vascular grafts, wound dressings, and hemostats.

32. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the processing forming or incorporating process is selected from the group consisting of solvent casting, melt processing, fiber processing, fiber spinning, fiber weaving, extrusion, injection molding, compression molding, lamination, and microparticle formation.

33. (original) The method of claim 31 further comprising incorporating an active agent into the polyhydroxyalkanoate.

34. (canceled)